

In the Claims:

33. (Thrice Amended) A composite structure in an IC chip, said composite structure comprising:

a first metal pad structure comprising a first interconnect metal;

a first via pad structure below said first metal pad structure, said first via pad structure comprising a plurality of segments of a first via metal and a first plurality of dielectric fillers, at least one of said plurality of segments of said first via metal extending along an edge of said first via pad structure, said at least one of said plurality of segments of said first via metal being connected to said first metal pad structure, at least two of said plurality of segments of said first via metal being connected.

45. (Thrice Amended) A method for fabricating a composite structure in an IC chip, said method comprising steps of:

fabricating a first via pad structure, said first via pad structure comprising a plurality of segments of a first via metal and a first plurality of dielectric fillers, at least one of said plurality of segments of said first via metal extending along an edge of said first via pad structure, at least two of said plurality of segments of said first via metal being connected;

fabricating a first metal pad structure above said first via pad structure, said first metal pad structure comprising a first interconnect metal, said first interconnect metal

being connected to said at least one of said plurality of segments of said first via metal extending along said edge of said first via pad structure.

51. (Thrice Amended) A composite structure in an IC chip, said composite structure comprising:

a first via pad structure comprising at least one first via metal segment, said at least one via metal segment extending along an edge of said first via pad structure;

a first metal pad structure below said first via pad structure, said first metal pad structure comprising a plurality of segments of a first interconnect metal and a first plurality of dielectric fillers, at least one of said plurality of segments of said first interconnect metal being connected to said at least one first via metal segment, at least two of said plurality of segments of said first interconnect metal being connected.

Please cancel claims 62-68.

69. (Twice Amended) A composite structure comprising:

a first via pad structure comprising at least one first via metal segment, said at least one first via metal segment extending along an edge of said first via pad structure;

a first metal pad structure below said first via pad structure, said first metal pad structure comprising a plurality of segments of a first interconnect metal and a first

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plurality of dielectric fillers, at least one of said plurality of segments of said first interconnect metal being connected to said at least one first via metal segment;

a second via pad structure below said first metal pad structure, said second via pad structure comprising a plurality of segments of a second via metal and a second plurality of dielectric fillers, at least one of said plurality of segments of said second via metal contacting said first interconnect metal, at least two of said plurality of segments of said second via metal being connected.